

Bunogestic, the new threat

CITY CORRESPONDENT

A new drug, bunogestic, has become a recent attraction at the Anandabazar slum in the city.

The slum is one of the oldest in Dhaka and has become a thriving spot for drug users and peddlers over the years. Bunogestic has gained popularity among heroin addicts who see it as a substitute for brown sugar (heroin).

Anandabazar slum is situated between Chankharpool and Fulbaria and is close to Bangabazar, the Secretariat, Nagar Bhaban (Mayor's Office) and the Police Bhaban. Its 10,000 inhabitants who huddle inside an area about one fourth of a square kilometre, are mostly day labourers and rickshaw-pullers. The land is a wakf property which the Railway authorities had given up about 70 years ago.

Although the prices of a puria (paper-wrapped pouch of drugs) of brown sugar and an ampoule of bunogestic are the same (Tk 50), addicts apparently prefer the latter as they see it as 'an escape' from brown sugar withdrawal, the physical gravity of addiction.

Bunogestic is an intravenous injection of buphenorphine group

produced by Rusan Pharma Ltd in Mumbai, India. It is usually used as a post-operative painkiller. One 2ml ampoule of bunogestic contains 6mg of buphenorphine as hydrochloride.

This particular brand is an unregistered drug in Bangladesh. It is not listed in the Bangladesh National Formulary 2003 of the Directorate of Drug Administration nor is it found in the Quick Index of Medical Products and Problems 12 which physicians and pharmaceutical companies usually consult as a guide.

The drug addicts normally inject one 2ml ampoule of bunogestic I.P with one 2ml ampoule of avil B.P and an ampoule of easium B.P. For stronger effect a 2ml ampoule of phenargan is often added also. There are 'experts' in injecting available at the slum. They charge Tk 20 for each shot. The cocktail creates temporary relief from anxiety followed by disillusion. The effect ends up in acute depression, said medical experts.

"I have never come across this drug before. Now that I am aware of it, I will take every necessary step to prevent its spread," said Professor Dr. Habibur Rahman, director of the Drug Admin-

istration Directorate.

Professor Dr. Nazmul Ahsan, chief consultant at the Central Addiction Treatment Centre (TCT) said bunogestic is potentially a deadly drug.

"It is the latest addiction in the country but dose fluctuation can cause sudden death. About 25 per cent of poly substance abusers and about three per cent of mono substance abusers use this drug," said Professor Ahsan.

"I have been taking brown sugar for the last 15 years and I could never stop. Now this cocktail makes me even higher than before and its withdrawal is also less physical," said an addict.

The growing demand for bunogestic cocktail, popularly called 'ampu' by locals is also becoming a more lucrative business for drug dealers.

"As the brown sugar business has gone down, I am thinking of switching to ampu," said a middle aged drug seller near the slum who hid the banned substance underneath her clothes.

There is a police outpost in Babupura just opposite of the Anandabazar slum. But policemen stationed there claimed that drugs were a problem of the past. The police guard and patrol the

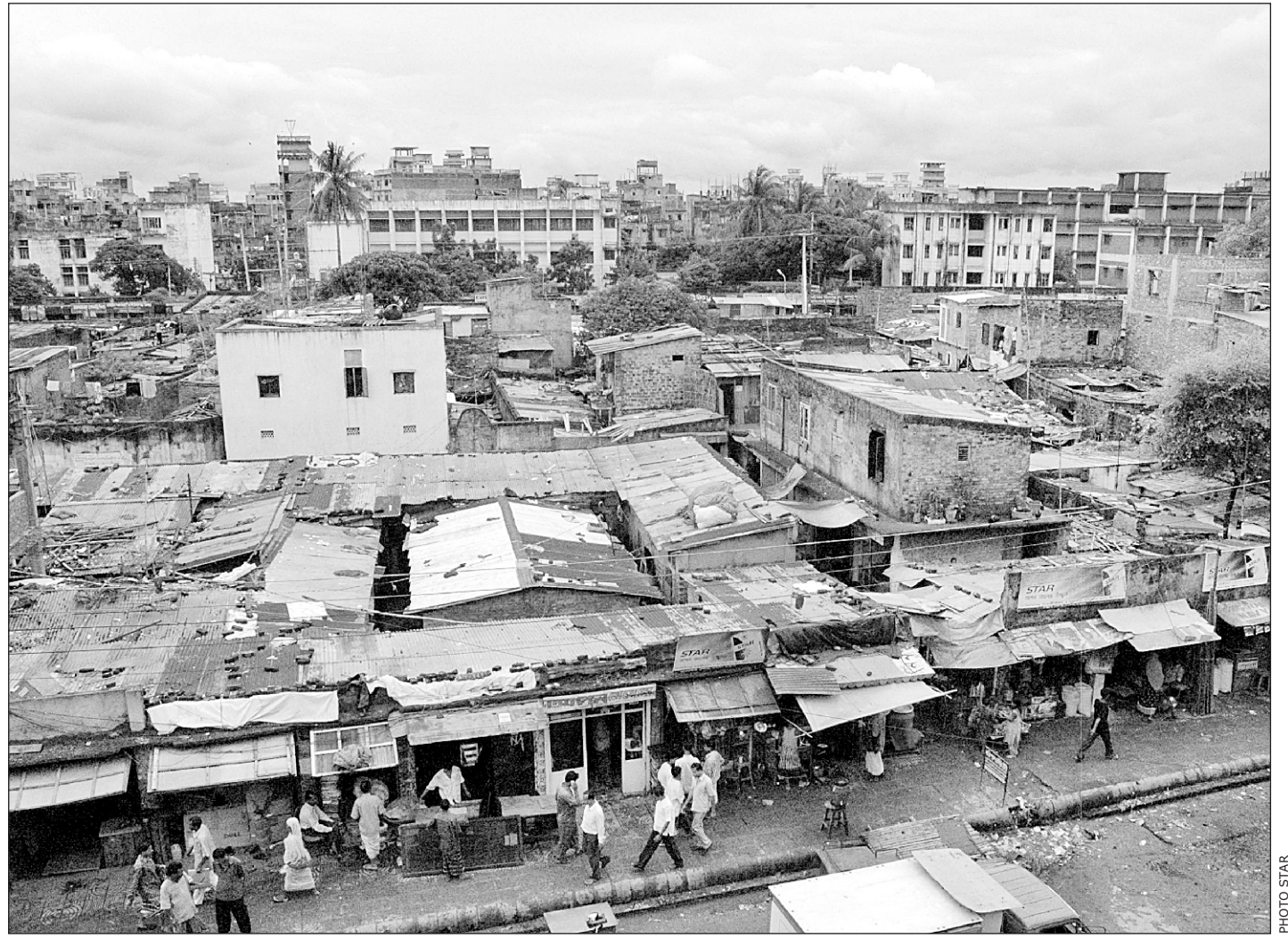
street in front of the main entrance of the slum but drug trade reportedly goes on unabated.

There are allegations that the law enforcers turn a blind eye to the illegal business as they receive a share of the drug money although policemen at the outpost vehemently denied that.

Locals said that one Liton, who is a leader of the ruling BNP's youth wing Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, is directly involved in the business. Fingers were also pointed at armed gangs which operate under blessings of transport leaders. The hoodlums collect tolls from the slum's inhabitants although it is wakf land. They also control the drug trade.

The Anandabazar slum's positioning give drug peddlers an advantage during any sudden police raids as there are many escape routes for them. There are about 20 to 25 entrances to the slum and the market it has been named after. Shops and restaurants surround the area from every side and the centre of the slum therefore is a safe place for the drug dealers and addicts.

"The drug trade came down a bit a while ago but it is thriving again," said a resident of the slum.



A bird's eye view of Anandabazar slum where Bunogestic, used as a substitute for heroine, is freely sold.

Novo Theatre catches imagination



Enthusiasm and curiosity have crept into many city dwellers who are found waiting in lines for long hours to see what is inside the Novo Theatre.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The Bhashani Novo Theatre, the country's first planetarium has attracted huge numbers of visitors since its inauguration on September 25.

People have found waiting in the queue at the Novo Theatre's gate for hours just to have a glimpse of what is there inside.

"The pressure of visitors is too much and we are unable to provide seats for the ever increasing audience," said Zahidur Rahman, the assistant curator of Bhashani Novo Theatre.

The Novo Theatre has a 275-seat planetarium where people can gaze at the solar system on an artificially created night sky.

The planetarium's authorities have been running four shows a day at 11am, 1pm, 3pm and 5pm. But the demand was such that they had to arrange an extra show at 7pm last Saturday. The price of ticket has been fixed at Tk. 30 for one planet show and one animal life show combined.

"We ran the extra show as a temporary measure but a steering committee decision is needed to arrange additional shows at 7pm regularly," said the assistant curator.

But the pressure is growing. Frustrated by waiting at the ticket counter for several hours without getting a ticket, some agitated people in a queue broke the glasses of the booth on Saturday.

"I had to wait for five hours but could not get a ticket. There is also no shed under which people waiting in the line can stand. The indefinite wait broke the patience of the crowd who damaged the glasses," said one person present during the

incident.

The Science, Information and Communication Technology Ministry opened the Novo Theatre for the public even though all of its supposed features were not yet ready.

The planetarium was yet to open two of its main attractions, the capsule ride simulator and three-D cinema.

"Simulation ride is not ready and we are unable to say when it might be. The three-D cinema is a gift from the South Korean government and we are not sure what will be shown there," said an official of the Novo Theatre. "There are other facilities in the project too but due to fund constraints, many things have not been installed," he added.

Many visitors said that they went there expecting to see a one and half-hour show on planets and stars. But at present, the Novo Theatre is screening a 40-minute planet show and another 40-minute feature on animal life.

Most people have found the planet show exciting although the programme on animal life received a less enthusiastic response.

"We have come here to see the planetarium and shows on astronomy. But I do not understand why they are showing animal life," commented Mustak Hossain, a businessman who came all the way from Chittagong with his two children.

Unable to explain the reason to the audience, the authorities tried to put off the animal life show on one occasion but faced stern criticism when it was announced.

"That was not a wise idea. We went there knowing that there will be two shows. After a lot of arguing and protesting the authorities finally agreed to screen the animal

life show again," said Nilima Chowdhury, a housewife.

Although people of all walks of life are coming to the planetarium, the majority of visitors are students and children.

"I made a mistake. I should have brought a notebook. There are so many things to learn from the planet show," exclaimed Purnota, a student of class six of Dhanmondi Girl's High School.

Total cost of the project is estimated at about Tk. 120 crore, which has been approved in the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecnc). The project has also incurred a loss of Tk. Three crore because of damaged machine parts which were essential for the planet show.

The vision behind creating the Novo Theatre was to inform people and especially the students about the solar system and to create interest about the world of astronomy and space science.

There will be exhibitions from time to time on space and different spheres of science at the Novo Theatre.

Bangladesh Astronomical Association has already put posters on astronomy on display at the planetarium's gallery.

"There is a demand for astronomical studies in our country but we could only meet the thirst of astronomy lovers once or twice a year. This planetarium will boost the interest of science and astronomy in students and children," said Mash Hur-ul-Amin, editor of Mahakash Barta, a space and science related magazine.

* Is that the right sequence?

useful telephonenumber numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International

Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Banladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air Alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

National

Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd. 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9,
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 955640
The American Centre (IRC)- 8813440-4, 9886395
The Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

OUTING

Museum and Zoo

National Museum- 8619396-9
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Friday 3 pm - 8 pm, Thursday closed
Muktijuddha Jadugarh- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am - 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadugarh- 8110046
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Shishu Jadugarh- 9666466
Open: 10 am - 6 pm, Sunday Closed

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazor
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachatter
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoi	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahat
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard - Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan